

# ST. LOUIS REPUBLIC

## MAGAZINE.

### Secretary Stevens

### World's Fair.

DETAILS OF THE VAST  
SHOW ARE AT HIS  
FINGERS' ENDS.



Walter B. Stevens is Master of More Detail Than Any Other Official of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition—Business Connected With All Fourteen Departments Is Referred to Him—He Dictates Instructions to Foreign Commissioners Throughout the World—The Work of Publicity Is Directly Under His Observation.

#### WRITTEN FOR THE SUNDAY REPUBLIC.

Walter B. Stevens is the pilot of the Exposition. In the coming tower of the secretariatship he is the hand ever on the steering wheel. President Francis is the captain in the chartroom. Director of Works Taylor drives the great engine. Director of Exhibits Skiff is the master of the cargo. But the man on the bridge, who presses this button, pulls that lever, his hand ever on the wheel, is the keen-eyed Secretary. Mr. Stevens is the master of more detail than any other official of the Exposition. Each is master of his special task, but Stevens is at the helm. He is the right hand of President Francis. He, therefore, carries, locked in his alert mind, all the executive secrets of the Exposition. The sphinx could not keep them more inviolate. Twenty years of close contact with statecraft in the national capital, as a tireless correspondent of an interior daily, have armed him with ideal qualities of secretaryship. He holds the public at arm's length.

On him a sureness of grasp, an instant appreciation of the point at issue. He thinks like a lightning calculator and acts with the decision of a great General. The polish of Washington official life shines out in the courtesy of his manners. In the modesty of demeanor and in the grace with which he can say "No." You quit his presence defeated, yet acknowledging that he is right. The Secretary's duties are a composite of the whole Exposition. Ultimately matters of detail connected with all fourteen departments find their way into his hands for confirmation and final transmission to their starting points. CHIEF OF THE BUREAU OF PUBLICITY. Mr. Stevens is the Acting Director of Exposition and Chief of the Bureau of Publicity. The policy of spending nearly the whole appropriation for advertising in the year leading up to the opening of the Exposition is his idea. It is an economy that is just beginning to show results.

The lavish impressions to be produced at the dedication mark the inauguration of a rapid-fire advertising at close range that for one solid year will not permit the public to forget the World's Fair. Intimate acquaintance with the harm often done great enterprises by premature publication has enabled the Secretary to guard the interests of this international show. At the same time his former newspaper experience has served to preserve cordial relations between the press and the Exposition. Under Mr. Stevens' direction as Chief of the Bureau of Publicity that institution is assuming an importance because of the engaging of skilled writers, who will produce matter of the grade demanded by the modern newspaper and magazine. Little matter for important publications leaves the bureau until the Secretary has subjected it to his criticism. His familiarity with the styles of different public prints allows him to decide instantly as to the availability of the manuscript. It falls within the Secretary's province to

share a part of the reception and entertainment of distinguished personages who visit the Administration building unannounced. He arranges audiences between these visitors and the President and decides on the importance of the matter at the time. ATTENDS EVERY MEETING OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. Mr. Stevens attends meetings of the President's cabinet and every meeting of the Executive Committee, the minutes of which are kept by him in person. His notes are written in longhand and afterwards transmitted to typewritten pages, which belong to volumes that are kept in vaults. All correspondence that is not deemed of enough importance to speed before President Francis is answered by the Secretary. Questions of official contact between departments of the Exposition are adjusted by this busy man. He keeps one eye on the accumulating expenses and another on the condition of the financial budget, ready at any moment to answer the inquiry of President Francis. He dictates instructions to the foreign Commissioners of the Fair throughout the world.

Their movements are kept on a chart that he carries in his head. He can tell the Executive Committee, on request, just where this man or that man happens to be at the time of the inquiry. He receives regular reports from these emissaries to distant lands and pushes their work. He is overlooking in a supervisory way all the preparations being made for the dedication, in sending invitations and receiving replies, because these details are interesting to the public through the medium of the newspapers. The work of domestic publicity and local publicity bureaus is directly under his observation. Mr. Stevens rises at 7 in the morning and is at his desk at the Administration building promptly at 8. He takes one hour for luncheon and quits work for the day at 5. All of his evenings are spent at his place of residence, the Beers Hotel, unless Exposition business demands his presence either at the St. Louis Club or some downtown hotel. One of his unshaking habits is to respond at any hour of every night, up to 10 o'clock, to the calls of newspaper representatives. It is known at the various editorial offices

of each newspaper that he does not desire to be disturbed after 10, when he retires. HOW HE ACCOMPLISHES A GREAT TASK. Only by the most rigid daily programme does Mr. Stevens accomplish the task to which he has set himself. Captains of industry in the East, whose wonderful feats of desk work have been much published, have only one trend for their minds. The Secretary of this gigantic Exposition has 100 topics every day that bear not the slightest resemblance. Finances are one thing and problems of how to direct the attention of millions of people to the big show are yet another. The Secretary cuts down the expense of a certain department one minute, only to spend more the next on another first-class advertising scheme. It is the ability to be pound wise and penny foolish that falls within the scope of Mr. Stevens' whole obligations. Men with schemes budge the Secretary. When they fail to take up the time of President Francis, the nearest man to the center of the Exposition becomes the buffer for his chief. These persons, many of them with im-

practicable ideas, must be sent away from the Fair. To accomplish this tact and patience are necessary. One of the characteristics of successful newspaper men is a "great patience." Mr. Stevens is a phenomenon on this point. It takes more time for some persons to tell their story than for individuals with directness of purpose. If the Secretary permitted patience to beat with these tales, virtue would take wings in flight. The mind of the Secretary adroitly anticipates the point toward which the visitor is leading so nicely, and surprises him with the whole plan, sentences before the talker expected to reach his climax. The schemes is told that it is impossible and then—he is standing outside the office door, wondering how he got there, on precisely the same footing with which he so confidently approached the threshold five minutes ago. James L. Ford, a veteran newspaper writer of New York, once said: "The secret of success in newspaper work is summed up in two words—adaptability and perennial youth." Mr. Stevens is approaching the middle of the span of life, yet to-day he is the quickest person, mentally or physically, in the Exposition service.